

# La Voce della Dante

Published by the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington (DAS)

<http://danteseattle.org>

December 2016

## December English Meeting:

### "Annual Christmas Party"

Wednesday, December 14th, 6:30 pm, Headquarters House

Please join us for our annual Christmas celebratory potluck on Wednesday, December 14th. Festivities begin at 6:30 pm at Headquarters House.

Highlighting the evening will be tombola, a game that can be best described as Italian bingo. Giuseppe Tassone will once again be host of this fun game and will call out the numbers in both Italian and English. There will be prizes for filling your card with certain number combinations.

As is usual for this celebration, we ask all those attending to bring an *antipasto* or *dolce* and a bottle of *vino* to share. This is a wonderful time to share the holiday spirit with everyone. So mark your calendar for December 14th.

## Upcoming Events

Wed, Dec 14th:  
"Annual Christmas Party",  
6:30 pm,  
Headquarters House.



No Italian Meeting in December.

## Time to Renew Your Membership

It's that time of the year when your membership needs to be renewed. Memberships are good for a calendar year—January through December.

Please renew at the next meeting or send your membership in per the instructions on the back page of La Voce.

*Have a Happy Holiday Season  
and May the New Year Bring  
Good Times to All...*



DAS Language students



## Our New Members

### Benvenuti Nuovi Membri

Cristina Zappoli  
& Curt Ryser

Paul Carrigan  
& Pamela Evans

**We thank you for your  
support of DAS.**

## \* DAS Star List 2016\*

While we appreciate those who support our Society through membership dues & volunteering, stars are awarded to those making extra cash contributions which allows us to provide additional services.

Grazie Mille for supporting the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington.

### Bronzo up to \$25

- \* Crawford, Barbara
- \* Crosetto, James & Deborah
- \* De Santis, Donald & Camille
- \* Gillett, Debra Rovetto
- \* Hoffman, Pat
- \* Whaley, Terrance & Sandra

### Argento \$26 to \$50

- \* Morton, Lorraine
- \* Reinert, Harry

### Oro \$51 to \$100

- \* Borriello, Rosa
- \* Bosi, Lawrence
- \* Cottrell, David & Jane
- \* DeMatteis, Dan & Carol
- \* Fonzo, Emilio
- \* Greenfield, Peter
- \* Larsen, David
- \* Minotti, Dominick

## From the President's Desk

Ciao tutti –

We're in the midst of the holiday season. Thanksgiving - and its various commercial appendages – has passed. I hung the wreath on the door and put the candles in the windows. Carol has started her Christmas baking. And our calendar is filling up with parties, open houses, dinners, and other assorted get-togethers.

I hope you've marked Wednesday, December 14 on your calendar – our annual *Festa di Natale* which every December takes the place of our regular English meeting. It's potluck – just bring something to share and I'm sure they'll be more than enough food and *vino* to make this a special occasion. The centerpiece of the evening is a game of *Tombola*, emcee'd by our Language School Director, Giuseppe Tassone in his inimitable *Italo-Americanese*. As many of you know, *tombola* is often compared to American bingo, which is sort of like comparing *O Celeste Aida* to *Mary Had a Little Lamb*. There'll be *tombola* prizes and door-prizes, too. We may even try once again to sing the most famous Christmas Carol from Italy, St. Alphonsus Ligouri's *Tu Scendi dalle Stelle*. And most importantly for the season, there'll be *amici simpatici e buona compagnia*.

Wednesday, December 14 at 6:30 pm in Headquarters House. Please come. Everyone is welcome.

Our annual *Festa di Natale per I Bambini* was also this month, on Saturday, December 3rd. It was another great success this year, with more than 15 children signed up as I write. It's another way the Dante Alighieri Society promotes Italian culture by giving our kids a chance to enjoy some of the same traditions that kids in Italy do this time of year – including the *presepio* or manger scene and *La Befana*, Italy's answer to Santa Claus. Reading Tomie da Paola's *Legend of Old Befana* to an audience of entranced children is magical and seeing *La Befana* mysteriously appear to sweep away the troubles of the past year in person – as the kids will at our *Festa* – adds to the seasonal enchantment.

Finally, on a more practical matter, just a reminder that membership in the Dante Alighieri Society is on a yearly basis, January to December. So now's the time to renew. Bruce Leone, our Treasurer, will be at the *Festa* on December 14<sup>th</sup> and taking renewals at that time. There's also instructions on mailing in your renewal or membership application on our website:  
<http://www.danteseattle.org/contact.html#member>

I hope your December is as warm and as rich as you deserve. And that the New Year brings you all good things.  
*Buon Natale a tutti i miei amici –*

*Dan DeMatteis*



## Language Program News

*Giuseppe Tassone, Italian  
Language School Director*

The Italian language program of the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington resumed on October 4, 2016 after the summer break. Students are currently completing their first quarter of Italian at various levels before continuing their school year with the second and third quarter in Winter 2017 and Spring 2017. This year 19 students enrolled in level A1 (beginning Italian). Students at this level are introduced to the basic phonetic, grammatical, and lexical structures through conversation and simple dialogues. Their instructor, Dida Berretta, keeps them engaged in a variety of activities including games, songs, and videos.

Fourteen students are taking level A2 (intermediate Italian) where Marina Gagliardi completes the work started in level A1 last year with the goal at the end of spring quarter to help them reach a level of proficiency that allow them *to communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. They can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment, and matters in areas of immediate need (Common European Framework for Reference levels– CEFR)* and to enroll in B1 where they are exposed to a different textbook and structure with more readings and sophisticated structures including the *congiuntivo*. At this level, we have eight students enrolled and the small class size allows the instructor, Michela Tartaglia, to give individual attention to each of them, just like in the C level, with the same number of students, where Laura Ciroi, who has been teaching with Dante since 2003, offers a personalized experience to her students to better serve their needs of advanced students close to fluency.

I am pleased to inform you that due to the structure of the program highlighted above, its high quality, and the role that the Italian Language program of the Dante Alighieri Society plays in the Seattle area, last month we have received a grant from the Italian Cultural Society and the Consulate General of Italy in San Francisco to support the teaching of Italian in 2016-17. The grant will aid in offering upper level courses even if the number of students is under the breakeven point and keep tuition low. We hope that next year, we will have the same support from them and anyone who values our work and our mission. As a non-profit organization with the goal of promoting Italian language and culture, we strive to keep tuition very affordable and much lower than comparable programs and we appreciate any help.

Another piece of good news is that Seattle University once again approved our program as a hosted-program which means that room fees have been waived for 2016-17. We are very grateful to Seattle University for its generosity and understanding the importance of our program to the community and we wish them a happy 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## \* DAS Star List 2016\*

### Oro \$51 to \$100

- \* Shiroyama, Sylvia
- \* Sportelli, Domenic & Louise

### Platino—over \$100

- \* Harmon, Gini
- \* Rodriquez, German
- \* Stimac, Stephen & Lindley, Martha

Consider making a donation to DAS today. Your donation helps DAS maintain the excellent programs and activities sponsored. Everyone benefits!

The names on the donation list will remain through December 31, 2016. If you make a donation after May 2016, your name will be on the donation list through 2017.

## DAS Board Meeting

Board meetings are held on the first Wednesday every other month from August through May with August being planning meeting.

The next board meeting will be held January 3rd.

Meetings are held from 7:00-8:30 pm in the Community Room at Merrill Gardens at First Hill (formerly Faerland Terrace), 1421 Minor Avenue on Capitol Hill. Meetings are open to all members.



(Continued on page 4 )

I want to conclude this news with a personal note saying that this summer, I had the pleasure to return after a decade to Palazzo Firenze in Rome to the headquarter of the Società Dante Alighieri and meet with secretary general Alessandro Masi, foreign committees coordinator Eugenio Vender, PLIDA coordinator Silvia Giugni, and others. They were highly interested in the society in Seattle and our language program as one that is worthy of carrying the name Società Dante Alighieri, similar to an Italian product of quality carrying the seal DOP (denominazione di origine protetta). In addition, they encouraged PLIDA to consider offering our students the official diploma issued by the Società Dante Alighieri called ADA (Attestato Dante Alighieri) by slightly revising our curriculum and it is something that I am currently exploring. In the September issue of *La lettera della Dante* (the newsletter of the Società Dante Alighieri) sent to more than 400 committees in more than 79 countries, the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington was featured as *Il comitato del mese* with an article and several images.

Winter quarter will start on January 5th. Registration deadline for winter quarter is December 19<sup>th</sup>. The 49 students currently enrolled can start their registration and new students can join the program as well. If you are a beginner student, please consider that Winter quarter is the continuation of fall, so it is recommended that you contact me for advice ([tassone@danteseattle.org](mailto:tassone@danteseattle.org)) before enrolling in the second quarter of level A1.

### **The Program:**

Since 1984, the local chapter of Dante Alighieri Society has offered a comprehensive Italian Language Program for all those interested in learning or perfecting their Italian language skills. Our instructors are qualified and native speakers, classes are small and our per hour instruction cost provides good value.

### **Classes Available:**

Six class levels from A1 to C2, each level consisting of three quarters—Fall, Winter, and Spring, are offered during the year as enrollment permits.

### **Schedule:**

The school year extends from late September or early October to June with a class break every 10 weeks. **Each class level begins in the fall and lasts for three quarters or 30 weeks.** Classes meet twice a week on Tuesday and Thursday evenings except the new class “Intermediate-Advanced Conversational Italian” that meets Monday & Wednesdays.

### **Location:**

Seattle University campus, Administration Building

### **Class Descriptions:**

*Beginning Italian (Level A1)* - This course is for people with little or no Italian language. Students will be introduced to the basic phonetic, grammatical, and lexical structures through conversation and simple dialogues. During the three quarter course, students will be engaged in a variety of fun activities and begin their journey of learning Italian.

*Elementary Italian (Level A2)* - The elementary level is the continuation of the beginning class or for those who have already studied some Italian. Students will finish exploring essential grammar structures while learning appropriate and relevant words and expressions. At the end of the three quarter course, students should be able to use basic structures of the language with confidence and be able to communicate well in daily situations.

*Intermediate (Level B1)* - This course will review and reinforce the student’s basic knowledge of Italian. Students will review and reinforce their knowledge of the language in addition to expanding their vocabulary and ability to understand written and spoken Italian. Students will be exposed to cultural and literary readings and will develop a greater understanding of Italian culture, lifestyle, and way of thinking.

*Upper-Intermediate (Level B2)* - This course is the continuation of B1. It completes the review and reinforcement of grammar covered in the previous beginning and elementary levels in addition covering any missing structures. This course will help students understand articles from newspapers and the web, song lyrics, literary excerpts, videos, and excerpts from films and commercials. At the end of the three quarter course, students will be able to engage effectively in a conversation, express opinions, and give simple explanations.

*Intermediate—Advanced (Level C1)* - This course is designed for students who have completed the grammar topics reviewed and expanded in level B1 and B2 or have a good grasp of them. Students will perfect their grammar and greatly improve their comprehension, conversation, and writing skills. Students will read and discuss literature, watch films and videos in Italian and converse about the cinema, art, Italian news, and current events. At the end of the three quarter course, one will be able to interact with Italian speakers fluently and spontaneously.

*Advanced Italian (Level C2)* - Level C2 is the capstone of our program. It is designed for students who have completed level C1 and wish to continue for an additional year. The goal of the three quarter course is to deepen and perfect the student's existing knowledge of the Italian language.

*Intermediate-Advanced Conversational Italian—NEW* - This is a multi-level conversational course open to students who have completed at least levels A1 and A2 and recommended for students with a level of proficiency above B1. This course will advance your fluency, listening comprehension and conversation skills, expand your vocabulary, and improve your grammar. Monday & Wednesdays

#### Course Schedule:

<i>Fall Quarter 2016:</i>	October 4 - December 8
Thanksgiving—No classes 11/24	
Pre-registration Deadline:	September 27
<i>Winter Quarter 2017:</i>	January 5 - March 14
Pre-registration Deadline:	December 19
<i>Spring Quarter 2017:</i>	March 30 - June 6
Pre-registration Deadline:	March 21

#### Class Fee:

Level A1 & A2 - \$180 per quarter  
Level B1 & B2 - \$275 per quarter  
Level C1 & C2 - \$300 per quarter

Intermediate-Advanced Conversational Italian—\$300 per quarter

For further information email: [info@danteseattle.org](mailto:info@danteseattle.org)

To register: [www.danteseattle.org/classes.html](http://www.danteseattle.org/classes.html)



[www.facebook.com/danteseattle](http://www.facebook.com/danteseattle)



#### La Voce

The holiday season is upon us and so begins the rush we all know so well. Putting this in perspective maybe it's time we step back and just enjoy the season for what it is...family, friendships... I say this but I know our family will have some busy times before the holiday season is over. But, I do hope to relax a little after this La Voce is out! I hope you will too.

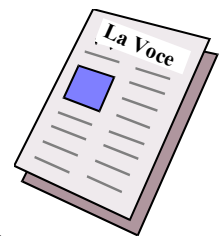
If you find in your explorations something related to the Italian life that may be of interest to our members, please consider sharing this through La Voce. Submissions are always welcome and by all means send the articles to me any time. The sooner the better!

Linda

La Voce Editor

[LTHDesign@comcast.net](mailto:LTHDesign@comcast.net)

## Delivering La Voce to Members



La Voce will be sent as a pdf file attachment to your email address. Or you may log onto the Dante website to see the latest issue as well as back issues of La Voce. The website is:

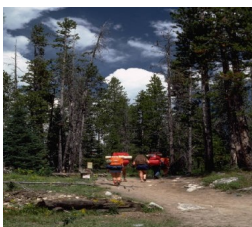
<http://danteseattle.org>

Adobe Reader is necessary to be able to view La Voce. You can download this program from the DAS website.

Be sure your mailbox isn't full otherwise you will have to check the Dante website.

## Club Alpino Italiano (CAI) PNW

Club  
Alpino  
activities:



**Dec 10th:** Christmas Potluck

*Location:* Steve Johnson's home in Seattle

*Contact:* Steve Johnson at:  
stevepaine45@gmail.com

This is CAI's annual Christmas potluck featuring favorite holiday foods. It's a good time to visit and share photos of 2016 travel and outdoor adventures.

Check the CAI PNW website for further information:

[www.cai-pnw.com](http://www.cai-pnw.com)

## Rita Cipalla Pictures



1st Pic: Rita Cipalla and husband Dale Smith traveled to Italy last winter to staff the Seattle-Perugia Sister City booth at the Perugia Market, an annual tourism event.

2nd Pic: Journalist Maurizio Aiello, with Cipalla outside the cemetery in Palazzolo Acreide, Sicily, wrote a story about her journey and search to find out more about her family history.



## PLIDA

*The Dante Alighieri Society of Washington is one of the few institutes in North America authorized to offer PLIDA (Progetto Lingua Italiana Dante Alighieri-Dante Alighieri Italian Language Project) certification.*

The Dante Alighieri Society of Washington in Seattle is an official PLIDA examination center.

PLIDA exams are designed by the Società Dante Alighieri staff to assess Italian as a foreign or second language.

Every year thousands of candidate throughout the world test their language competence and get a certificate recognized by the Italian government and accepted globally.

### *What is PLIDA?*

Società Dante Alighieri promotes best practices in teaching Italian as a foreign and second language and has a full range of resources to practice Italian and get ready for the PLIDA exam; SDA provides regularly training sessions, refresher courses, and guidance to syllabus design. PLIDA exams are aligned with international standards and the Common European Framework of Reference levels (CEFR).

### *Who can Register?*

PLIDA exams are designed for all people who need to assess their skills in Italian language and to obtain an official certification. There are no age limits for exam registration. Each candidate can choose the level that may be best for him/her and may sign up for multiple levels within the same session. In order to sign-up for a PLIDA exam, there is no need to have accomplished lower levels. The timetable for the exam sessions, which is valid all over the world, is available on the website [www.plida.it](http://www.plida.it). For the dates in Seattle visit: [www.danteseattle.org/plida](http://www.danteseattle.org/plida)

### *Why take a PLIDA Exam?*

- To request a resident permit for Italy (from level A2).
- To obtain a longer residence permit of Italy (EC residence permit) from level A2.
- To register with Italian University without taking the Italian examination (levels B2, C1, or C2).

*The level required depends on the University and type of faculty.*

- To obtain exemption from the Italian exam for the bilingual "patentino" in Trentino Alto-Adige.
- To explain your level of Italian more clearly on your curriculum vitae.

### *PLIDA Certificate Recognition*

Plida is recognized by:

- The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- The Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research
- The Italian Ministry of Interior
- The Italian Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
- The Sapienza University of Rome

(Continued on page 7)



## La Voce Needs You!

**T**ell a story, write an article, share your Italian heritage; send via email (as a Word document) to LTHdesign@comcast.net. You can also mail it via regular mail to Linda Heimbigner, 4355 Little Falls Drive, Cumming, GA 30041. Keep things coming!

Thanks to everyone who has contributed articles.

Article submission deadline:

<u>ISSUE DATE</u>	<u>SUBMISSION DEADLINE</u>
January 2017	By December 20th
February 2017	By January 20th

(La Voce is not published June, July, or August)

**NOTE:** Please keep in mind the above submission deadlines and it's great if articles are submitted as early as possible.

### Dante on the Internet!

Check our website. It has links to our recent newsletters (including this one) as well as information on speakers and other matters of interest. Our web address is:

<http://danteseattle.org>

(PLIDA from page 6)

*Where can I take the PLIDA Exam?*

PLIDA exams are offered by more than 310 center across the world including the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington. For other centers search on [www.plida.it](http://www.plida.it)

### ONLINE RESOURCES

On [www.plida.it](http://www.plida.it) you'll find:

- News and information about PLIDA certification
- Documents and materials for PLIDA certification
- Programs for PLIDA refresher courses for teachers
- Textbook in Italian for foreigners and other works published for PLIDA by the publishing house Alma Edizioni.
- Video, presentations and educational materials

The 2017 calendar of exams in Seattle for 2017 will be available in January at: [www.danteseattle.org/plida](http://www.danteseattle.org/plida)

For any questions, contact the PLIDA coordinator in Seattle Giuseppe Tassone at:  
[plida@danteseattle.org](mailto:plida@danteseattle.org)



### Dante Alighieri Society of Washington

*"Società per la diffusione della  
lingua e della cultura italiana nel  
mondo"*

Mailing address:  
PO Box 9494  
Seattle, WA 98109  
(425) 243-7663

The Dante Alighieri Society of Washington is a nonprofit corporation organized to promote Italian language and culture within the state of Washington. Membership is open to anyone interested in the goals and ideals of our society regardless of ethnic origin. *La Voce della Dante* is published eight times a year by the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington. All rights reserved.

Dan DeMatteis  
*President*

Harry Reinert  
*Vice President*

Linn Crosetto  
*Secretary*

Bruce Leone  
*Treasurer*

Sylvia Shiroyama  
*Past President*

David Larsen  
*Counselor*

Houghton Lee  
*Counselor*

Dominick Minotti  
*Counselor*

Stephen Stimac  
*Counselor*

Michela Tartaglia  
*Counselor*

Linda Heimbigner  
*La Voce Editor*

Terry Hanlon  
*Hospitality*

Melinda Jankord-Steedman  
Anita Bingaman  
*Program Chairs*

Giuseppe Tassone  
*Language Program Director*

# Grant from Italian Cultural Society/Consulate General San Francisco

by Giuseppe Tassone

It is my pleasure to inform you that we have received and deposited the funds (\$1,000.00) from the Italian Cultural Society/Consulate General of Italy in San Francisco to support the Italian language program in 2016-17.

Below is the letter Giuseppe received about the Italian Language School funding.



## ITALIAN LANGUAGE FUNDING 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR

Dante Alighieri Society of Washington  
Attention to: Giuseppe Tassone  
DAS - Italian Language Program  
P.O. Box 16257  
Seattle, WA 98116  
Grant: \$ 1,000

Dear Mr. Tassone,

18, October 2016

As you know, the Italian Cultural Society and the San Francisco Italian Consulate have allocated grant funds to support the teaching of Italian at your school for the entire academic year of 2016-2017. Thank you for providing the initial information we requested regarding your Italian Language Program. Enclosed please find our payment of \$1,000 (one thousand dollars). As you are aware, the grant monies are to assist your school with teacher salaries and study materials for your Italian program for the entire scholastic year 2016-2017, and must be used solely for that purpose.

We have made every effort to support schools, which like yours provide Italian language classes to their students. We will continue these efforts as long as funding is available. The grant guidelines require that all checks be cashed by your school as soon as possible, and no later than December 1, 2016.

We hope that funding will continue to be available so that we may continue to assist Dante Alighieri Society of Washington Italian Language Program teach Italian language and culture to its students. We look forward to continuing to work with you and the staff and students to support your Italian classes. We thank you for your continued efforts to provide a quality Italian language program at your school and look forward to continued collaboration and success in the year to come.

Sincerely,

Patrizia Cinquini Gheruti and Tonia Prencipe  
Directors, Italian Language Grant Administration

CC Paola Ebranati, Director of Education, San Francisco Consulate of Italy

• Italian Cultural Society • PO Box 189427 Sacramento, California 95818  
• 916 482-5900 • www.italiancenter.net • italy@winfirst.com

## Pre-Dante Pasta

Join us for the pre-Dante Pasta dinner preceding the English language programs. To attend the dinner, reservations



are required. The only way to make these reservations is by calling the activity line at (425) 243-7663 by 5 pm on the Monday before the meeting or send your request via email to: [dante.reserve@gmail.com](mailto:dante.reserve@gmail.com).

*Please remember to bring your homemade Italian desserts to finish off this great meal.*

This is a communally prepared meal – the preparations start at 5:30 and the meal is served at 6:30. People who come early help with set up and cooking, those who come late help with the clean up.

Pasta dinner cost is \$8 per person, \$15 per couple, if reservations are received on the Activity Line by 5 pm on Monday before the meeting. Late reservations and walk-ins are charged \$10 per person and subject to availability. We meet at Headquarters House, 2336 15th Avenue, Seattle, WA. DAS will not be providing wine for the pre-Dante pasta dinners so bring your own wine to enjoy and share with others.

**Reminder:** There is NO pre-Dante pasta dinner for the December Christmas celebration.

# Northwest Film Forum Letter

Dear Dante Alighieri Society of Washington,

My name is Sophie Donlon and I'm writing from the Northwest Film Forum to tell you about a film screening that we think your community will really enjoy.

Beginning on December 8th at 7:30 pm and continuing that weekend, *Fire at Sea*, the newest film from acclaimed Italian director, Gianfranco Rosi, and winner of the 2016 Berlinale Golden Bear will be making its Seattle premiere. The film centers on Samuele, a young boy who lives on the Mediterranean island of Lampedusa, which is the closest European landmass to Libya and Tunisia. While Samuele's life follows a steady pattern of going to school and hanging with friends, everything around him speaks to the thousands of men, women and children who, for the past 20 years, have braved the ocean to Lampedusa in search of freedom. Simultaneous to following Samuele and other residents around the island, Gianfranco Rosi documents a few of the many horrifyingly conditioned boats that wash ashore, as migrants finally reach land after a harrowing journey. The two worlds, that of the newly arrived refugees, adrift and traumatized, and the timeless Sicilian locals, shaped by generations of devotion to the sea and the church, have little interaction, but are powerfully linked.

We hope you'll join us for this beautiful and timely documentary that explores the complex impact of the refugee crisis both on the refugees themselves and the Italian locals who come to share their home. You can learn more about the event and buy tickets on our website: <http://nwfilmforum.org/live/page/calendar/4140>, and on facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1697493190578848/>.

Can you help spread the word about this event by sharing this information with your community?

Northwest Film Forum is located at 1515 12th Ave between Pike & Pine in Capitol Hill. Our phone number is (206) 329-2629. We hope to see you at the theater!

Sincerely,  
Sophie Donlon, Northwest Film Forum



## DAS at Festa Italiana

by Toni Napoli

The Dante booth at the Festa Italiana was a great success. There was interest and enthusiasm about Dante and the Language School. The volunteers talked to many people and invited them to take the quiz, to provide their email, and to locate their Italian heritage on the map.

There were 18 new entrees for email and 74 people took the quiz! That tells us that the quiz is a wonderful way to engage people. Thank you, Dominick Minotti, for your idea, knowledge, and work on the quiz.

There was an effort by many Dante members to make the weekend a success. Thanks to all the volunteers who spent two hours at the booth: Nick Minotti, Pamela Evans, Caterina Wartes, Gini Harmon, Elaine Armstrong, Bruce Leone, Jane and Dave Cottrell, Hugh Lee, Anita Bingaman, and Dom and Louise Sportelli.

A special thanks to the set up and tear down crew: Harry Reinert, Dom Sportelli, Stephen Stimac, Guiseppe Tassone, and Nick Minotti.

Festa Italiana is a forum to be a part of the Northwest Italian community and to have fun at the event. I'm glad I was able to organize our Dante members to be a part of Festa.



# **“Sono Siciliana” Rita Cipalla Seeks her Roots**

by Rebecca Novelli

## **Tell us about your background.**

I’m originally from Erie, PA, and attended college at the University of Dayton in Ohio, graduating with a BA in English and journalism and an MA in English literature. I began my career in Washington, D.C., first at the U.S. Department of Education and then at the Smithsonian Institution, where I was director of communications at the National Air and Space Museum. As the world’s most popular museum, it was a very exciting place to work and allowed me to meet lots of VIPs, from astronauts and presidents to Prince Charles and Michael Jackson.

## **What brought you to Seattle?**

After about ten years at the Smithsonian, I felt it was time to try something new. I came to Seattle on a brief business trip around the Fourth of July in the early 1990s. The weather was so beautiful—especially compared to hot, humid Washington, D.C.—that when it was time to return, I didn’t want to leave. I made a last minute arrangement to stay another week. At the end of that week, I went back, quit my job, packed up, and by the first of the new year I had moved to Seattle with a plan to start my own business. I’ve never regretted my decision.

## **Tell us about your business, Cipalla Communications.**

I had no professional network in Seattle but I had solid credentials in marketing and communications. Given my education and museum background, I chose to focus on the arts and tourism. I began by visiting these types of organiza-

tions in Seattle to learn more about them and make them aware of my services in public relations, media outreach for the opening of Benaroya Hall, promoting Bellevue Arts Museum, and working on the Frye Museum’s expansion and relocation.

Today, my professional focus continues to be on the non-profit organizations with missions that are educational, environmental, or cultural. My clients include the University of Washington, tourism marketing for the cities of Federal Way and Kirkland, Braided River Books, The Mountaineers, Burmer Music, and Philanthropy Northwest, to name a few.

## **Do you speak Italian?**

I’m learning. Studying Italian is a way for me to enjoy my heritage and feel connected to tradition and family. I grew up hearing Italian at my grandmother’s house. My mother spoke fluent Italian, too, but not to us, her children. This was common in immigrant families. It was important to be Italian—a point of pride, in fact—but parents wanted their children to assimilate. I wished that I had learned Italian as a child, but about eight years ago I decided to start studying the language. A few years ago, I took classes with Laura Ciroi through DAS and joined the organization. I found it to be a very warm and welcoming group, and it doesn’t hurt that their events have great food, too! I travel to Italy every year and often enroll in language classes there. So far, I’ve studied in Lucca, Verona, Arezzo, Perugia, and Montepulciano. I’m a member of Il Punto, as well.

## **Are you active in other Italian-American organizations?**

Yes, definitely! I am the Northwest correspondent for L’italo-Americano. This Italian-American newspaper, out of Los Angeles, has been published continuously since 1908. I report on Italian or Italian-American people and activities in our region. Some of my reports are contemporary, such as covering the lab that provides carbon fiber research used in the manufacturing of Lamborghinis, and others are more historical in nature, such as the article about Mother Cabrini, America’s first saint. (Editor’s note: Rita Cipalla’s articles for L’italo-Americano will be found here: <http://www.italoamericano.org/search/site/rita%20cipalla>)

I’ve also served on the board of the Seattle-Perugia Sister City Association for the past four years. I produce the organization’s newsletter and keep its website up-to-date. Recently, I assisted with a new Sister City exchange program that involves sending local ceramic artists to Italy for a three-week residency and bringing their Italian counterparts here. Pottery Northwest in Seattle and the Academy of Fine Arts in Perugia are the participating art organizations. Our first exchange sent a local



New passport for Italian citizenship in 2013.

(Continued on page 11)

ceramist to DeRuta, the famous Italian pottery center, this spring. It was a huge success, and we're excited to welcome an Italian potter here next year.

**Like so many people who study Italian, your interest in learning the language is related to your heritage. Have you been doing genealogical research as well?**

Yes. As I said, I grew up in an Italian household. My paternal grandparents emigrated from Sicily right before World War I. During the 1920s, when my father was six years old, his mother died. His father could not look after the children and also work, so the family was separated. The girls went to a girls' orphanage and the boys went to Harborcreek Home for Boys, which was run by nuns. My father remained there until he was in his twenties. The orphanage became his family. He even changed his given name to Louis in honor of one of the nuns, Sister Louis, who he was very close to. I later learned that there had been many name changes in his family's past. This made my father's background a sort of mystery—even to him.

My genealogical research began after my parents died, in particular my mother. At first this interest grew out of my desire to obtain dual citizenship, a process I completed in 2013. I had no specific need for it, really, I simply thought, *Why not become a global citizen?* To recognize dual citizenship, the Italian government requires documents for births and marriages on both sides, going back to the generation that first immigrated. Although I was claiming citizenship on my mother's side, which came from Lucca, my research helped me learn more about my father's origins as well.

I encountered many difficulties in finding my father's ancestors. Finally, using different spellings of my paternal grandmother's maiden name, Corritore, and different spellings of my surname, Cipalla, I was able to trace both of my paternal grandparents to Palazzolo Acreide, a small Sicilian town of about 8,000 people located in the hills west of Siracusa. (The ancient Greek settlement there was called Akrai and later Acre.)

When I visited for the first time in April and went through the town record books, I discovered that my great grandfather back in the 1850s was also orphaned as an infant. No one in Palazzolo knew who his parents were, so the townspeople made up a name for him—Marco Cipolla, or Mark Onion. It was a name that no one else in town had, so his lineage would not get mixed in with any other family. Basically, my father's history starts at that point with a "cognomen inventato" or invented surname.

We long suspected that Cipalla, my surname, was originally Cipolla, but until I started doing my research we were not sure. With the Internet, it is so much easier to find documents on line and request original copies. When I got a copy of my father's birth certificate, it clearly says Cipolla, but our name had already been altered at some point, probably when my father was sent to the orphanage.

**What recommendations to you have for those who would like to research their Italian ancestry?**

*Keep going.* Records are often misspelled because handwritten notes are easy to misread. I can't tell you how many spellings of Cipalla I've put into Google search. I still haven't found my grandfather's entry point in the US.

*Use your Italian.* Once I found some documentation for my father's family, I was able to learn much more. Knowing Italian was very helpful, especially during the time I spent in Palazzolo Acreide this spring. I was happy to learn that the town is famous for having some of the best food in all of Sicily—and I agree. This little town offers some very high quality and very inventive cuisine. There are about twenty restaurants there plus four museums, so there is plenty to do. It's also been designated a UNESCO world heritage site for its stunning baroque architecture and the ruins of the Greek settlement of Akrai. When I got there, I felt shy about using my Italian, but I decided that it didn't matter that I couldn't speak perfectly. I just asked everyone I met, "*Sono Siciliana, Conoscete la mia famiglia?*" ("I'm Sicilian. Do you know my family?") People responded very positively.

*Ask for help.* I found people were eager to help me. On the advice of a friend, I wrote in advance to the mayor to say that I was coming. I said that my family was from Palazzolo Acreide and that I had never been to Sicily before. The mayor wrote back the very next day: "We can't wait to meet you," he said. "Be in my office at 9:00 AM..." Then, I wrote to the editor of the local newspaper, *Siracusa*

(Continued on page 12)

(Rita Cipalla from page 11)

News. I asked if they could help publicize my visit to find family members. I heard almost immediately from the reporter who covered Palazzo Acreide who asked if he could follow me around and report on my visit.

By the time I arrived in Palazzolo, lots of people knew I was coming. The people in the records office were instructed to help me with my research; the tourism bureau assigned a staff person to show me around town. They even had an art expert lined up to give me a private tour of the Greek ruins at Akrai. I barely had a minute to myself the whole time I was there. It was without doubt the trip of a lifetime!

---

### Other Information:

Some Genealogical Resources for Italian-Americans

The Italian Interest Group (IIG) of the Eastside Genealogical Society (<http://egs-iig.com>) provides info and assistance to those who are seeking to learn more about their Italian heritage, including these links: (<http://egs-iig.com/links.php>) Also, there are genealogical research services available at Seattle Central Library by appointment or during genealogist's open hours: Tue-Sat, 11-2 and 1-3; and Sun 1-3. The department is located on level 9. DAS members may also find the Italian family history research resources at the websites below helpful in genealogical searches. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

<http://www.italiangenealogy.com>  
<http://Italianroots.org/resources.htm>  
<http://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/Italy/italian.htm>  
[http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~jfuller/gen\\_mail\\_country-ita.html](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~jfuller/gen_mail_country-ita.html)  
<http://search.ancestry.com/Places/Europe/Italy/Default.aspx>  
<http://Italiangen.org>  
<http://familysearch.org>  
<http://genealogypro.com/italroots.html>

## MANGIA!

by Rebecca J. Novelli

**J**ust in time for holidays and beyond, *La Voce* inaugurates this new column on Italian cooking. We'll review cookbooks (some recent, some new, some available, some out-of-print) and include a recipe or two from each. DAS members are encouraged to submit their favorite Italian cookbooks and recipes, too. Send your information to Rebecca Novelli, [rjnovelli@comcast.net](mailto:rjnovelli@comcast.net).

Last year on our visit to Sicily my husband and I fell in love with Sicilian cooking. Who wouldn't?

Our travel agent in Siracusa advised that *La Cucina Siciliana di Gangivecchio* by Wanda and Giovanna Tornabene was among the most respected Sicilian cookbooks, so I lost no time in ordering it as soon as we returned to Seattle. (It's available new and used on Amazon from \$0.88 to \$197.64.) Gangivecchio was an ancient Roman outpost and is now the location of the authors' famous restaurant and inn. Early on in the book we learn about the Tornabene family, the history of their recipes, and preferred ingredients. Then, the book proceeds in a familiar order: antipasti, soups, pasta e sauces, rice, meat, fish, vegetables, salads, sweets, and suggested menus. There are Sicilian favorites like arancini, of course, and a recipe for swordfish with tomato sauce, capers and green olives has been a favorite among our guests. However, the Tornabene recipe I use most frequently is the one for caponata (sweet and sour eggplant stew), perhaps because we enjoyed it often at a little deli on a winding side street in Siracusa's historic section. This recipe makes 1½ quarts, is amenable to substitutions or adjustments, keeps well, and is delicious cold or at room temperature. Hot, too, though that's not the recommended way. (Confession: I've even combined it with other things in the food processor and turned it into soup!) It makes a delicious appetizer to serve on crostini or as an accompaniment to the meal itself.

### Tornabene's Caponata

#### Ingredients

Olive oil

3 large eggplants with stem ends removed, cut into 1-inch cubes

1 large onion chopped

3 C fresh tomato sauce

(1 large can or box of diced Italian tomatoes, 1 large onion chopped, ½ C freshly chopped basil leaves plus 6 whole basil leaves, salt, ½ C olive oil, 1 tsp. sugar, freshly ground pepper)

¾ C pitted green Sicilian olives

½ C capers

1 C thinly sliced hearts of celery including 2 Tbsp. chopped leaves

½ C red wine vinegar or to taste

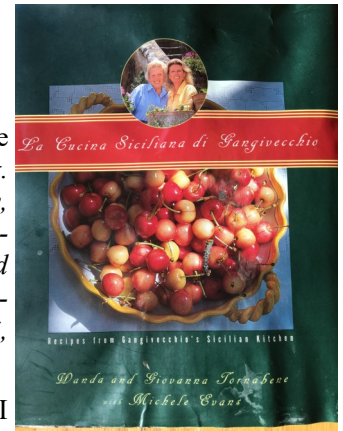
1 Tbsp. sugar or to taste

Salt and freshly ground pepper

#### Directions

Heat ½ inch of olive oil in a large frying pan and cook the eggplant, in batches, until golden brown. Add extra oil to pan if needed while cooking. Drain on paper towels.

In a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan, heat ½ C olive oil and cook the onion for 5 minutes, stirring often. Add the remaining ingredients and the drained eggplant. Combine gently but thoroughly, and simmer over low heat for 30 minutes. Taste for seasoning. The caponata should have a pleasant sweet-and-sour flavor. Serve at room temperature or cover and refrigerate overnight and serve cold.



# DANTE CALENDAR 2016–2017

Dante Alighieri Society of Washington

<p><b>2016:</b></p> <p>September 14th: English Meeting Dominick Minotti “Festa Quiz Preview”</p> <p>September 28th: Italian Meeting Marcella Nardi “Daily Life in Medieval Italy”</p>	<p><b>2017:</b></p> <p>January 11th: English Meeting Terry Tazioli, Journalist of TVW’s <i>Well Read</i></p> <p>January 25th: Italian Meeting Franco Tesorieri, Honorary Consul for State of Washington &amp; Montana “Formation &amp; Purpose of Il Punto-Italian Cultural Center</p>
<p>October 12th: English Meeting Julia Normand “A Guided Discussion of the Ins &amp; Outs of Traveling Alone”</p> <p>October 26th: Italian Meeting Iole Alesandrini “Civita Institute in Rome”</p>	<p>February 8th: English Meeting Wine Tasting Dinner w/Arnie Millan of Esquin Wines</p> <p>February 22nd: Italian Meeting Albert Sbragia, Associate Professor, Italian Studies, University of WA “Italian Spaces &amp; Globalization: Matteo Garrone’s <i>Reality</i>”</p>
<p>November 9th: English Meeting Rebecca Novelli “The Train to Orvieto” (Writing a Novel about Italians &amp; Italy)</p> <p>No Italian Meeting in November</p>	<p>March 8th: English Meeting Scott Fitzgerald of Bicerin USA “History of and a Tasting of his Liquors from Torino”</p> <p>March 22nd: Italian Meeting FR Thomas Lucas SJ, Rector of Seattle University Jesuit Community “Restoration of the Rome Living Quarters of Saint Ignatius Loyola, Founder of the Jesuits”</p>
<p>December 3rd: Festa di Natale per i Bambini</p> <p>December 14th: Annual Christmas Party</p> <p>No Italian Meeting in December</p>	<p>April 12th: English Meeting Election Night</p> <p>April 26th: Italian Meeting TBA</p>
	<p>May 10th: English Meeting Rob Prufer “La Liberta’: Judith &amp; Archetypes of Liberation in Italian Art”</p> <p>No Italian Meeting in May <i>June-August 2016: Summer break, no meetings.</i></p>

**A**t the first meeting of each month (English program), pre-Dante pasta is communally prepared at 5:30 pm and served at 6:30 pm. Call the Activity Line (425) 243-7663 by the Monday before to reserve your spot (s) or email your request to: dante.reserve@gmail.com. Cost: \$8.00 per person or \$15.00 per couple

Unless otherwise noted, all programs are held at Headquarters House, 2336 15th Avenue S, in the Beacon Hill neighborhood of Seattle. Directions are on the back page of La Voce.

## Membership Application

I (We) want to promote Italian language and culture and request membership in the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington. Enclosed is my (our) check in full payment of annual membership dues (\$40.00 for individual, \$50.00 for a family).

Mark one : ( ) **New Membership**    ( ) **Membership Renewal**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed:

Membership Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution:

Social Programs & Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution Categories (For recognition stars):

Bronzo (bronze) - Up to \$25

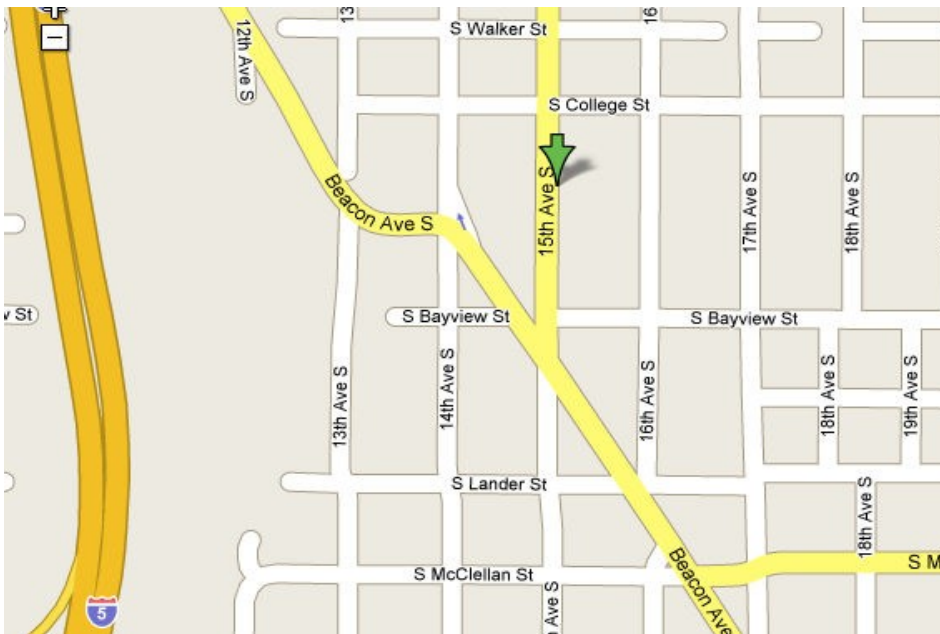
Argento (silver) - \$26 to \$50

Oro (gold) - \$51 to \$100

Platino (platinum) - Over \$10

Please return completed membership application with check to:

Dante Alighieri Society of Washington  
c/o Bruce Leone  
2522 2nd Ave W  
Seattle, WA 98119



## Directions to Headquarters House

Headquarters House is located at **2336 15th Avenue South** in the Beacon Hill neighborhood of Seattle. From I-5, take the Columbian Way/Spokane Street exit, eastbound. Turn left at the first light, Spokane Street and left again at the next light, 15th Avenue S. After crossing Beacon Avenue, Headquarters House will be on the right side between Bayview and College Streets.